



NEWS RELEASE



United States
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service
Salmon - Challis National Forest
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Salmon, Idaho 83467

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Forest Completes Local Travel Plan Meetings

The Salmon-Challis National Forest completed the latest round of local public meetings with a meeting held Monday in North Fork, attended by 35 citizens interested in the Forest's travel planning effort. Other meetings were held in Salmon, Leadore, Challis, and Mackay.

The meetings were open house style with the public able to stop in and visit with the local District Rangers and their staff. The open house meetings are very helpful in providing the Rangers and the travel planning team the opportunity to talk one-on-one with the forest users," said Forest Supervisor Bill Wood. "We are able to acquire much more useful information than we can in other types of meetings and everybody gets an opportunity to speak."

Wood said he was particularly happy to see the large turn out for the Salmon meeting. "We had over 200 people sign-in and may have had another 50 to 100 people that did not sign in." People commented about opening routes, closing routes, ATV use, motorcycle use, four-wheel drive use and numerous other travel planning issues. We listened and explained what are doing on the Salmon-Challis National Forest."

"The meetings also gave us the opportunity to dispel some misconceptions that people had about the travel planning process.

- There will be no change in management for, foot, horse or over-snow uses.
- We are not closing the entire Forest to motorized uses, however motorized travel will be limited to the designated routes.
- We have not made a final decision on which alternative will be selected.
- We are listening – the open house meetings were designed to gather peoples' thoughts and ideas about travel planning on the Forest during the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) comment period.

- We have four alternatives in the DEIS with a wide range of motorized opportunities.
- The Rangers and the Forest Supervisor will choose a preferred alternative after listening to the public comments from this round of public meetings and DEIS comments.
- Motorized access to dispersed camping would be allowed to varying degrees under each alternative.
- The Forest will continue to manage motorized access for firewood gathering under the terms of the personal firewood permits.

One concern noted by a number of people was the maps that accompany the DEIS. They are difficult to read. Enlarged maps showing the various alternatives were used during the meetings. These large scale color maps are now available at all the Ranger Districts and the Supervisors Office. The maps are also on the Salmon-Challis National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/sc>.

Using the information in the draft, additional public comments, and recommendations from the District Rangers, Forest Supervisor Bill Wood will make a decision on the Travel Plan late next spring with the intention of implementing the new Travel Plan in late 2009.

If you were unable to attend one of the open house meetings you can still submit written comments to:

Responsible Official William Wood, Forest Supervisor,
1206 South Challis Street
Salmon, ID 83467

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), and Word (.doc) to comments-intermtn-salmon-challis@fs.fed.us with Travel Planning DEIS on the subject line.

The notice of availability for the Travel Planning and OHV Designation DEIS was published in the Federal Register September 26, 2008. The 60 day comment period ends November 25.

If you have questions about Travel Management Planning, please contact a District Ranger or Karen Gallogly, Travel Planning Team Leader at (208) 756-5103 Salmon-Challis National Forest, 1206 South Challis Street, Salmon, Idaho 83467 or at kgallogly@fs.fed.us.